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HISTORY  
OF THE  
PARISH AND TOWN  
OF  
BERLIN. *Mass.*

BY A. CARTER.

WOCCHESTER, MASS.

1875.





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Worcester, Mass., 1878.  
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WORCESTER, MASS.

1878.



Mem. 56

## INTRODUCTORY.



**I**N order to understand truly the history of Berlin, it seems necessary to consider it in its embryo state—through its infancy and youth, to mature age. It must have been some time in embryo, for the records show that the land deeded by Samuel Jones and David Rice to the citizens of Bolton, who had petitioned to be set off as a Parish, to be used as a *burying ground*, was so deeded in 1768, some ten years before said citizens were set off as a Parish. In 1778 the section of territory now comprising Berlin, excepting a small tract taken from Marlboro', was set off from Bolton by an act of the government of Massachusetts Bay, and was designated by the title of the *South Parish of Bolton*, it was a political organization, presenting territorial limits, and including all the citizens within that territory. It seems to have been a preliminary step toward town organization. The next step was an enactment forming the same territory, together with a few farms from Marlboro', into a district under the title of the *District of Berlin*. It seems to have remained a district about 28 years, and was then incorporated as a town, with equal rights of other towns of the Commonwealth. As a proof of the foregoing, there is here added the enactments and proceedings as taken from the records by the present town clerk, covering the space of time from the set-off as a parish up to its incorporation as a town in 1812.

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# HISTORY OF THE PARISH AND TOWN OF BERLIN.

RECORDS FROM 1778 TO 1812.

## STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY.

In the year of our Lord one thousand, seven hundred }  
and seventy-eight. }

AN ACT, for setting off a part of the Town of Bolton in the County of Worcester, as a separate Parish.

*Whereas*, for the greater convenience for attending the Publick Worship of God, it is found necessary to set off a part of the town of Bolton, in the County of Worcester, as a separate Parish.

BE IT ENACTED by the Council and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, That all the Lands, with the inhabitants thereon in the town of Bolton, to the southward of a line beginning three miles, one-half, and sixty-two rods from the south-westerly corner of said Bolton, at a stake and stones on Lancaster line, thence running East twenty-four degrees, South one mile, one-half and forty rods, to a heap of stones near Amos Merriam's shop, thence running East thirty-seven degrees, South three miles and forty rods to Marlboro line.

Be and is sett off hereby as a separate Parish, by the name of the South Parish in Bolton. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said South Parish





shall be, and hereby is invested with all the rights, privileges and immunities which by law other Parishes are invested with.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all the inhabitants of said Town shall pay all their former ministerial taxes in the same manner as if the town had not been divided, Except, that assessment made January, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight, and that tax, with the use that may hereafter be made, shall be paid according to said Incorporation, any former votes of the town to the contrary notwithstanding.

And be it further enacted, that the inhabitants of each Parish in said Town have full liberty to attend Publick Worship, in which Parish they please, and to pay their ministerial taxes for their Polls and Estates where they attend. Provided they return names annually some time in the month of September to the Assessors of the Parish they propose to attend Publick Worship in, and all that shall not thus return their names, to be taxed to the Parish within the limits of which they shall live in the month of September annually.

And be it further enacted, that Samuel Baker, Esq., be, and is hereby empowered to issue his warrant to some principal inhabitant of the said South Parish requiring him to notify and warn the inhabitants to meet at such time and place in the South Parish as by said warrant shall be duly specified, and there choose such Officers of said Parish. And the inhabitants qualified by law to vote, being so assembled, shall be, and are hereby impowered to choose such officers accordingly.

In the House of Representatives, April 13th, 1778.

This Bill having been read three several times, passed to be enacted.

J<sup>S</sup> WARREN, Sp<sup>k</sup>r.

In Council, April 13th, 1778, this Bill having had two several readings, passed to be enacted.

JNO. AVERY, D. Sec<sup>y</sup>ary.

Consented to by the major part of the Council.

True Copy: Attest, JNO. AVERY, D. Sec<sup>y</sup>ary.

A True Copy of Parish Record,

ALBERT BABCOCK, Parish Clerk.



WORCESTER, ss. To Samuel Jones of Bolton, in said County.

Gentleman: Whereas, by an Act of the General Court, passed this present year, of our Lord, one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-eight, a part of the town of Bolton, in the southerly part was sett off and incorporated into a separate Parish by the name of the South Parish. And, whereas by the said Act, the subscriber is authorized by warrant, directed to some one principal inhabitant of said Parish, requiring him to give warning to the inhabitants of said South Parish, to meet at such time and place as shall be specified in said warrant, to choose Parish Officers.

These are therefore, in the name of the Government and people, to require you the said Samuel Jones, to give notice to the inhabitants of the said South Parish, qualified to vote in town affairs (by posting up this warrant and notification in some public place within the same) to meet at the house of Samuel Jones, innholder in said Parish, on Tuesday, the nineteenth day of May inst., at two of the clock in the afternoon, then and there,

1st. To choose a Moderator to govern said meeting.

2d. To choose all necessary Parish Officers, and have this warrant at the time of said meeting and place aforesaid, with a return of your doings thereon.

Given under my hand and seal at said Bolton, this fifth day of May, A. D. 1778.

SAMUEL BAKER, Justice of the Peace.

*Worcester, ss.* By virtue of this warrant, I have notified and warned the inhabitants in the South Parish of Bolton, qualified to vote in Parish affairs, by readding and by posting up this warrant at the house of Samuel Jones, Innholder, fourteen days before said meeting, to meet at the time and place for the purposes in said warrant.

Bolton, May 19th, 1778.

SAMUEL JONES.

Bolton, South Parish, May 19th, 1778.

At the house of Samuel Jones, the inhabitants of said Parish, being on due warning met:

1st. Chose Samuel Baker, Moderator to govern said meeting.

2nd. Chose Jonathan Merriam, Parish Clerk. Sworn.

3rd. Voted to choose three persons for a Parish Committee.



- 4th. Chose James Goddard the 1st Committee Man.  
 N. B. The above minutes were taken by the Moderator.  
 5th. Chose Abijah Pratt 2nd Committee Man.  
 6th. Chose Joshua Johnson 3rd ditto  
 7th. Chose Jonathan Merriam, }  
 8th. Chose Timothy Jones, } Parish Assessors.  
 9th. William Sawyer, Jr., } Sworn.  
 10th. Chose Samuel Jones, Parish Treasurer. Sworn.  
 11th. Chose Fortunatus Barnes, Collector. Sworn.

SAMUEL BAKER, Moderator.

A second meeting was held July 6th, 1778, to agree upon a Meeting-house spot for said Parish, and

2nd. To see what the Parish will do about having preaching amongst ourselves.

Bolton, Sept. 29th, 1778.

In Parish meeting assembled. Voted to have preaching among ourselves, and to choose a committee to hire a Minister. Chose James Goddard, Fortunatus Barnes, and Joshua Johnson for said committee. Then voted under the article following, the first grant of money to support preaching of £100, and also £13, 9s. to pay the incorporation expences. From this time preaching was secured to the South Parish, ever afterwards.

At a subsequent meeting, dated Dec. 24th, 1778, voted to choose a committee to take a deed of the Meeting-house spot, on the little hill north of the road leading from Samuel Jones house to Samuel Rice shop, at the crotch of the roads.

#### (COPY OF DEED.)

*Know all Men, by these presents*, that I, Samuel Jones of Bolton, in the County of Worcester, and State of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, Yeoman, for and in consideration of the love and good which I have for the inhabitants of the South Parish in s<sup>d</sup> Bolton, and for y<sup>e</sup> speedy settlement of the Gospel in s<sup>d</sup> Parish, have given, granted and do by these presents give, grant, aliene and fully, freely, and absolutely confirm unto the Inhabitants of y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> South Parish in said Bolton, their heirs and assigns forever, one acre and twenty rods of land in s<sup>d</sup> South Parish for a Meeting-hous place and accommodation, bounding as follows: Begining at a red oak on the South side of y<sup>e</sup> County road,





and runs westerly nineteen rods with y<sup>e</sup> said Joneses land to a heap of stones by the Burying field; then Northerly, crossing the County road five rods, then Northeasterly ten rods to a small blak oak or mark of said County road; then turning aa little more Notherly runing on y<sup>e</sup> Northwesterly side of a town way twenty-six rods: then crossing sd way two rods to heap of stones; then Southwesterly eleven rods and an half to a heap of stones; then Southerly twelve rods to a heap of stones; then Southwesterly five rods to y<sup>e</sup> first mentioned bounds, excepting a County road and a town way being within s<sup>d</sup> bounds given, and to have and to hold the s<sup>d</sup> given and granted premises together with all their appurtenances free of all incumbrances whatsoever, to them y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Inhabitants, their heirs and assigns as an absolute estate of inheritance in fee simple forever; and I y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Sam'l Jones, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators do covenant and engage the above demised premises to them the s<sup>d</sup> Inhabitants of y<sup>e</sup> said South Parish in Bolton, their heirs and assigns against the lawfull claims or demands of any person or persons whatsoever, forever hereafter to warrant and secure and defend by these presents.

In witness whereof I do hereunto set my hand and seal this eighteenth day of January, A. D. one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine. SAMUEL JONES. (Seal.)

Signed, sealed and delivered

WORCESTER, ss.

in presence of

March 1st, 1779.

Phinias Moore,

Nath'l Longley.

The above named Samuel Jones appearing, acknowi-

edged the above written instrument to be his free act and deed.

Befor me, JOHN WHITCOMB, Ju. Pea.

Rec'd March 5th, 1779. Entered and examined for

NATH'L BALDWIN, Reg'r.

WORCESTER, ss. The foregoing is a true copy of record, recorded in the Registry of Deeds, Book 80, Page 485.

Attest: HARVEY B. WILDER, Reg'r.

Chose Silas Bailey, Eph'm Fairbanks and Jacob Moore, committee under Article 3d. Voted to build the House soon as convenient, of the same size of Northboro, except one foot in heighth; then voted to choose a committee to furnish material for the same, of five persons. Chose Jona-





than Merriam, Fortunatus Barnes, James Goddard, Timothy Jones and Wm. Sawyer, Jr. for said committee.

May 3rd, 1779, under warrant made the following grants of money, 25 pounds to pay Samuel Jones for use of his house in time past, in holding meetings for Public Worship. Granted 200 pounds to hire preaching in future—then at the adjournment, May 31st, 1779, granted eight hundred pounds in addition to all other sums, to enable the committee to carry on building the Meeting-house, and also instructed this committee to provide Rum, Cider, Spike Poles and other necessities for raising the Meeting-house in said Parish.

EPHRAIM FAIRBANKS, Moderator.

The Meeting-house being raised, and the floor being laid, (the lining floor only) the meetings for worship, and for Parish business, were held within the house afterwards, for some time in an unfinished state, and remained the same for several years, owing to the depreciation of paper money, which was to the rate of one dollar of silver was worth forty dollars of paper, or continental money.

But according to the Records, the Parish maintained the Preaching of the Gospel, and on the 12th of March, 1781, voted to concur with the Church in inviting the Rev. Reuben Puffer to become their Pastor, with no objections—so says the Record—the conditions of his settlement were as follows. Upon the acceptance of the invitation of the Church and Parish to become their Pastor, he was to receive one hundred and sixty pounds settlement in silver money, or in paper money at the common exchange, and sixty-six pounds, thirteen shillings and fourpence, as a yearly salary in silver money, or paper money at the common exchange.

Then voted to choose a committee to prepare the Invitation of the church and congregation and lay it before Mr. Puffer, and said committee consist of three persons. Chose Josiah Sawyer, Henry Powers and Abijah Pratt. Thereon June 11th, 1781, voted in Parish Meeting assembled, that the Parish will find Mr. Reuben Puffer twenty cords of wood at his dwelling house so long as he remains Minister of said Parish. July 30th, 1781, at Parish meeting, voted to concur with the church in their choice of a council as follows—the Church in Sudbury, Church in East Sudbury, the Church in Stowe, the Church in Westboro, the first Church in Shrews-



bury, the Church in Northboro, the Church in Lancaster.

And that the day of the Ordination be Wednesday, the twenty-sixth day of September next—and the committee to issue letters missive were Jacob Moore, Joel Fosgate, Stephen Bailey. This committee was to provide for the Council, and prepare a place to hold the Ordination services. The Meeting-house was not finished suitably for to hold the services in, so they were held upon the knoll east of the Meeting-house under the shade of a white oak tree.

Under the same Warrant, at an adjourned meeting, it was voted to petition the Town of Bolton to be sett off as a separate Town or District, which was consummated in 1783. From this to 1833, the business of the Parish was changed to the District of Berlin, when all business was carried on as in Town affairs, under the name of District, until 1812, when it was incorporated as the Town of Berlin.

Here follows the Act of Incorporation of what to this day constitutes the Town of Berlin.

#### COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the year of our Lord, 1784, An Act to Incorporate the South Parish in the town of Bolton, together with David Taylor, Silas Carley, Job Spafford and John Brigham, Inhabitants of Marlboro, with their estates, into a District by the name of Berlin.

Whereas it appears on representation to this Court, that it would be productive of publick good, and to the benefit and satisfaction of the inhabitants and proprietors of the South Parish in the Town of Bolton, and the above named inhabitants of the Town of Marlboro should they be incorporated into a distinct District, and that all persons immediately concerned are agreeing thereto.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the lands hereafter described, and included within the following boundaries with the Inhabitants thereof, be, and hereby are, incorporated into a District by the name of Berlin, bounded on the North by Bolton, East by Marlborough, South by Northborough, and West by Lancaster.

And the said District of Berlin shall be, and hereby is invested with all the privileges and immunities of any District within this Commonwealth, as made and provided.



Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said District of Berlin shall be subjected to pay their proportionable part of all publick debts owing by the Town of Bolton at the time of the passing of this act, according to the present taxable property of the Town of Bolton, and the District of Berlin, exclusive of that part of said District of Berlin which before the passing this act, was part of the Town of Marlboro.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said District of Berlin shall be at their proportionable part of the expense of supporting the poor belonging to the said Town of Bolton, previous to the passing this act, to be apportioned in like manner as is expressed in the foregoing proviso, and any poor which in time to come may be turned on the said Town of Bolton, or shall be received and supported by that Town, or by the said District in whichsoever such poor had their situation.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said District of Berlin shall have a good right to claim and receive one equal third part of the publick stock of arms and ammunition belonging, before the passing this act to the Town of Bolton.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said District of Berlin may join with the Town of Bolton in the choice of a Representative, which Representative may be an inhabitant of the Town of Bolton, or of the District of Berlin, and shall be paid by the Town of Bolton and the District of Berlin in the same proportion as they shall pay other Publick charges, and the Selectmen of Bolton shall annually, at the usual time for issuing a warrant for notifying the voters to assemble for coming to the choice of a Representative, issue their Warrant directed to some Constable, or Constables of the District of Berlin, to warn the voters of the District to assemble with the said town of Bolton for that purpose.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the Inhabitants and Proprietors of Lands, which before the enacting hereof belonged to that part of the District of Berlin which was part of the Town of Marlboro, shall be holden to pay all taxes already assessed on them by the Town of Marlboro, anything in this act to the contrary notwithstanding.





And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that Samuel Baker, Esq., is hereby authorized to issue his warrant directed to some principal Inhabitant of the District of Berlin, requiring him to notify the inhabitants of the said District, qualified to vote by law in town affairs, to assemble at such time and place as he shall therein direct, to choose all such officers as Districts within this Commonwealth are directed and required by Law to choose in the Month of March, annually, and the said District of Berlin shall be considered as belonging to the County of Worcester, and the Easterly boundaries thereof, shall be the boundaries between the Counties of Middlesex and Worcester.

In the House of Representatives, March 16th, 1784.

This Bill having had three several readings, passed to be enacted. TRISTRAM DALTON, Speaker.

In Senate, March 16th, 1784. This Bill having had two several readings, passed to be enacted.

SAMUEL ADAMS, President.

Approved: JOHN HANCOCK.

A true copy, attest: JOHN AVERY, Secretary.

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Copied by Albert Babcock, Parish Clerk of the First Parish in Berlin Oct. 14th, 1878.

Here follows the Warrant of the first meeting of the organization of the District of Berlin.

WORCESTER, SS., To Fortunatus Barnes, a principal Inhabitant of the District of Berlin,—Greeting:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby authorized and required to warn the freeholders and other inhabitants of the said District, qualified by Law to vote in Town or District affairs, to meet at the meeting-house of said Berlin, on Monday, the twelfth day of April, instant, at one of the clock in the afternoon of the said day.

1st. To choose a Moderator to preside at said meeting.

2nd. To choose all such officers as Districts are by Law impowered to choose in the month of March annually; and have this warrant, with a certificate of your doings thereon, at the time and place of said meeting.

Given under my hand and seal this fifth day of April, in the year of our Lord, 1784, and in the eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America.

SAMUEL BAKER, Justice of the Peace.





WORCESTER, SS., April y<sup>e</sup> 12th, 1784.

This may certify, that in obedience to the within warrant, I have notified and warned the Inhabitants of the District of Berlin, to meet at the time and place, and for the ends and purposes within mentioned, by order of the Hon. Sam'l Baker, Esq. FORTUNATUS BARNES.

In observance of the foregoing Warrant, dated April 5th, 1784, the Inhabitants of the District of Berlin, met at the Meeting-house in said District, on the twelfth day of April, 1784, and proceeded as follows, viz :

1st. Chose the Hon. Samuel Baker, Esq., Moderator for this meeting.

2nd. Chose Jonathan Merriam, District Clerk. Sworn.

Chose Lieut. James Goddard, Mr. John Temple, Jona. Merriam, Mr. William Sawyer and Capt. Barnabas Maynard, Select-men. All sworn.

Mr. David Taylor, Mr. Jona. Merriam and Lieut. Henry Powers, Assessors. All sworn.

Constable, Joel Fosgate. Sworn.

Treasurer, Lieut. Timothy Jones. Sworn.

Then voted to choose the other officers by hand vote, except the Wardens.

Then chose for Highway Surveyors, Mr. Nathan Jones, Eph'm Fairbanks, Esq., Levi Merriam, and Capt. Barnabas Maynard. All sworn.

Tything-men, Mr. Robert Fife and Ebenezer Worcester.

Mr. Abel Baker and Jona. Baker, Hog Reaves. Allsworn.

Mr. Thomas McBride, Culler of Hoops and Staves. "

Mr. Jonathan Jones, Surveyor of Boards and Shingles."

Mr. John Temple, Sealer of Leather. Sworn.

Then voted to adjourn this meeting unto Thursday the twenty-ninth day of April instant, to meet at this place at four o'clock in the afternoon, and s<sup>d</sup> meeting is adjourned accordingly. Attest: SAMUEL BAKER, Moderator.

DISTRICT OF BERLIN, April 29th, 1784, from the adjournment of this meeting of the organization of the District, we now pass to the Act of Incorporation of the District of Berlin into a Town, in the year 1812—in a period of twenty-eight years.



## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the Year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and twelve.

An Act to Incorporate the District of Berlin into a Town by the name of Berlin.

Article 1st. Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court Assembled, and by the authority of the same : That the District of Berlin, in the County of Worcester, be and hereby is, Incorporated a town by the name of Berlin, subject to the like duties and requirements, and Vested with all the Powers, privileges and immunities which other towns do or may enjoy agreeably to the Constitution and Laws of this Commonwealth.

Article 2nd. Be it further Enacted, that either of the Justices of Peace for the County of Worcester, be, and he is hereby authorized to issue a Warrant directed to a freeholder, an Inhabitant of the said Town of Berlin, requiring him to notify and warn the freeholders and other Legal Voters thereof, to meet at such convenient time and place as shall be appointed in said warrant, for the choice of such Officers as towns are by law required to choose and appoint at their annual town meetings.

In the House of Representatives, February 5th, 1812.

This Bill having had three several readings, passed to be enacted.

In Senate, February 5th, 1812. This Bill having had two several readings, passed to be enacted.

SAMUEL DANA, President.

Council Chamber, February 5th, 1812.

Approved: ELBRIDGE GERRY.

Secretary's Office, February 10th, 1812.

A true copy. Attest: BENJAMIN HEMANS, Sec'y.  
WORCESTER, SS. To Mr. Ephraim Badcock, a freeholder and Inhabitant of the Town of Berlin,—Greeting.

In the Name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this Warrant was issued by Levi Merriam, for the qualified voters of the Town of Berlin, to meet at their meeting-house on Monday, the second day of March next, at one o'clock, P. M., to act on the following articles, viz :



Article 1st. To choose a Moderator to preside at said meeting.

Article 2nd. To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

LEVI MERRIAM,

A Justice of the Peace for the County of Worcester.

WORCESTER, SS. In obedience to the above order, I have notified and warned the Legal Voters of the Town of Berlin to meet at the time and place, and for the purposes mentioned.

Berlin, Feb. 26th, 1812. EPHRAIM BADCOCK.

Proceedings of meeting, Berlin, March 2nd, 1812.

In observance of the foregoing Warrant, the freeholders and other inhabitants of the Town of Berlin, met at their meeting-house, and proceeded as follows, viz :

Article 1st. Chose Dea. Stephen Bailey, Moderator, to preside at said meeting.

Article 2nd. Chose Town Officers as follows.

Dexter Fay, Town Clerk.

Selectmen, Stephen Bailey, James R. Park, James Goddard, Jr., David Barnes, Alvan Sawyer.

Solomon Howe, Amos Sawyer, Silas Houghton, 2nd, Assessors.

Treasurer, Solomon Howe.

Constable, Stephen Pollard.

After the Treasurer and Constable were chosen, the collection of taxes was set at Auction to the lowest bidder, and was undertaken by Stephen Pollard, for \$1.39 for collecting one hundred dollars, and in the same proportion for collecting the whole amount. His bondsmen were Mr. Adam Bartlett and Mr. Amherst Bailey.

Adjourned.

STEPHEN BAILEY, Moderator.



### BERLIN AS A PARISH.

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The Rev. Reuben Puffer was settled as minister of the Parish in the year 1781, and continued as minister through its existence as a Parish, and as District, and as Town, until his death. His ordination took place on a little knoll east of the common, under a white oak tree, the meeting-house being unfinished and not suitable for the occasion. There is a house now standing on said knoll, built by myself on contract with Franklin Conant, and is the house now owned by L. Woodbury, the records say east of the meeting-house, and I know that it was where that house stands, from my mother who was present at the ordination.

It will be perceived by the records that at all the meetings called by the authority of the legislature, all the inhabitants qualified by law to vote in town affairs, were notified to meet for the purpose of organization. That the district superseded the parish, and in all their public affairs they acted as a town, except they joined with Bolton in the election of a representative, and were required to pay their proportional part of the expense of such representation.

### BERLIN AS A TOWN.

The Town superseded the District, and was then independent, having no further relationship with Bolton ; in all their public affairs afterward they acted as a town, all their taxes for religious purposes were levied as a town, and the minister's salary was paid by the town. The twenty cords







of wood due the minister by settlement was contracted for by the town, and paid for by the town.

In 1822 the old meeting-house was taken down by vote of the town and a new house built in its stead, and is the house now standing on the same premises. It was built by the town, and paid for by the town; I am sure of it from the fact that after I became an acting citizen an article came up in a town warrant, at a legal town meeting to see if the town would relieve the committee chosen by the town to build the meeting-house, from personal responsibilities incurred by them by hiring money for the use of the town, to pay for building the meeting-house, having given their own personal security for the same. The town did relieve them, whether by payment of money or giving the town's security, I am not sure, but sure I am the town did relieve them from their indebtedness. After the meeting-house was finished, the pews were sold at auction, and every man became possessed of one, who apparently had means to do so, and nearly the whole town went to meeting, and every one appeared happy and contented. There was no discord, no contention, they were neighborly, peaceable and happy. They needed no locks or bolts on their doors; everyones' property and rights were respected, and they were a happy people; but that did not long remain, the serpent entered the Garden of Eden, and discord and unhappiness followed. Milton has it the serpent was found squat like a *Toad* at the ear of *Eve*, but the Savior baffled the serpent. At the time about which I am speaking, the serpent seems to have been obliged to change his tactics. The puritan age seems to have advanced too far toward the millenium; the subtle serpent had to turn preacher to accomplish his purpose. If he had then been found, I think it would have been squat like a toad at the ear of *Johnathan Edwards*, President of Princeton College in New Jersey. He seems to have learned



wisdom by watching divine purposes and proceedings. It was necessary for him to select a mind capable of perceiving and executing his purposes. He must conjoin himself to a superior mind, capable of receiving, consolidating and arranging a code of laws, with penalties annexed, which were too horrible to be readily received in the mind as a theological system of belief, unless predicated and elucidated by a mind so ingenious as to baffle common perception and understanding. Such a mind he found in Johnathan Edwards. He might have then said like *Mark Anthony* at the funeral of Caesar (speaking aside) "Now let it work." It did work, and the work was comprehensive ; it convulsed puritan New England from center to circumference. The churches which had until then been town organizations were after that split up into fragments. I say town organizations, and the missive letters sent by the Church in Berlin inviting to the Council for the settlement of Dr. Puffer, ministers from other churches, are said by the records to have been sent to Sudbury, East Sudbury, Stowe, Northboro', Westboro', Shrewsbury, Boylston and Lancaster,—all towns, no allusion to Parishes. But the Edwards' doctrine created new ideas, and new churches consequently sprung up. Berlin had its Edwards' champion in the person of Dea. Dexter Fay, his phrenological organization fitted him for the work which he pursued, the organ of wonder *large*, and that of fear also prominent ; he pursued his work with the tenacity of a veteran. His mind appeared to be unbalanced, he could see one thing and others would pass by apparently unnoticed, or their value underrated, he seemed to have had the Edwards' doctrine "on the brain," all other ideas must bend to that. He construed that to mean, what I was told by one who attended school where he was teacher, thus all persons who have sinned are doomed after death to be cast into a fire more intensely hot than any earthly fire, and there remain



forever without consuming, or the painfulness ever ceasing, unless redeemed before death from that penalty in the manner prescribed by Johnathan Edwards' theological scheme ; believing that he was indefatigable in proselyting and indoctrinating his views upon others, not so much his equals, but those of inferior mental capacities compared with his own, he would enter houses when the male head of the family was absent, and by his ingenuity excite the fears of wife and daughters by his ingenious arguments and entice them away from their homes to attend meetings over which he presided, as chief manager,—disregarding the wishes of the husband and father,—thus destroying the peace of what had been happy homes. The father who had been accustomed, after his day's labor, to come to his home and find there a happy wife and daughters, with a table well spread with the comforts of life, after partaking of which he sat down with his family, and during the evening apparantly enjoyed a foretaste of heaven upon earth, suddenly found the scene changed ; instead, he found there a pandemonium, after Dea. Fay's stealthy entrance into his home in his absence. Dea. Fay could not see that discord was not Christianity, or if he could, he did not, and probably because his eyes were fixed on that terrible abyss described by Johnathan Edwards, but was never foretold or described by the Savior. He could not see that true christianity made persons more kind, more charitable, more affectionate, more loving, husbands, wives, sons and daughters, and that his course produced the opposite effect.

I well knew one man who had suffered by his course. I had daily intercourse with him for some years ; he had been Town Clerk many years, was a first-class millwright, and in every way a respected citizen. He told me that his family troubles were worse than a civil war, and were caused by Dea. Fay and his coadjutors. Another instance of improp-





er interference was in a prospective marriage relation between a young lady and gentlemen, well known to each other, both worthy and respectable inhabitants of the town, and apparently calculated to produce a happy union. Dea. Fay persuaded the young lady to believe that her soul's salvation would be endangered by marrying a person whom he termed an *Infidel*. By frequent interference the attachment was broken off, and she lived and died what was termed a petulant *old maid*. The man whom she discarded did not marry until at an advanced age. I knew them both well and am sure they would have been useful citizens, and an ornament to the town, had not their own private affairs been interfered with. There were other cases I might mention, of improper interference, but I forbear.

Dea. Fay had a successful coadjutor in the person of Lady Puffer, the second wife of the Rev. Dr. Puffer. She was a woman of commanding presence, of friendly disposition, and in every way calculated to be a pleasant companion and neighbor. I know it from experience, which I will hereafter relate. She was a firm believer in the *Edwards'* theology. She was not the first woman who led her husband astray. By the persuasion of them and their friends, Dr. Puffer was persuaded to ignore as he did all his former associates in the ministry, who assembled and did take part in his ordination. He had exchanged with them, and his people had become familiar with their presence, were edified by their eloquence, had often clasped with them a friendly hand, and they seemed almost like persons of the same family.

But a change took place ; to show what influences produced it, an anecdote may here be stated. There were always two services held on Sunday, and the intermission between was only one hour, and the elderly people who lived at a distance were unable to go home and return, hence they





stayed over, and were wont to frequent the house of one Houghton, just south of the common. It had been rumored one Sunday that Dr. Lyman Beecher, father of Henry Ward Beecher, a prominent preacher in what was then termed the orthodox belief, would be there and preach, but instead of Dr. Beecher, Rev. Joseph Allen, of Northboro', a colleague of Minister Whitney, one of the original councilors at the ordination of Dr. Puffer, did preach, and when the elderly ladies, at noon, were assembled at the house of said Houghton, one old lady, wife of Dea. Cyrus Houghton, observed, "what wise preaching we had to-day, I could sit all day and hear such preaching as that." The ever-present Dea. Fay, happened to be there, and exclaimed, "do you call that good preaching, Mrs. Houghton." She replied, "I'm sure I do, don't you?" He replied, "I guess you don't know who it was." She replied, "It was Dr. Beecher, wasn't it?" "Oh no," said Dea. Fay, "that wasn't Dr. Beecher, it was little Jo. Allen of Northboro'." And little Jo. Allen and his associates were soon after that left out in the cold. The people were surprised and much grieved; they longed to see their old friends and valued religious councilors, but they did not appear, instead they saw strange faces in the pulpit, except a few, such as Packard of Lancaster, Bucklin of Marlboro', and one or two others who took no part in Dr. Puffer's ordination. The people grew uneasy, and a petition was drawn up by Johnathan D. Merriam, or at his instance, and numerously signed by citizens, members of the society, and presented by said Merriam to Dr. Puffer, praying him to exchange with neighboring ministers, as he used to do. His reply was, "I cannot be dictated by my people in my old age; I will supply my pulpit myself;" and the people reluctantly acquiesced. They made no further effort during the life of Dr. Puffer. While the people acquiesced, Dea. Fay was ever busy, no labor or effort was to great to accom-



plish the end he had in view. He used to go to market often, with hay and farming produce, with a pair of horses, starting in the afternoon, would drive all night, or until nearly morning, then stopping to bait, a little out from Boston, at daylight drive in and dispose of his marketing, his business done, he would start for home, instead of driving out a short distance and putting up for the night, as other teamsters did, he would drive clear home without resting the poor horses, and gave as an excuse, "there is to be a religious meeting at Berlin, and I must be there." The poor horses had to travel two nights in succession, and during the second night drawing their master, and wagon, and perhaps some other loading, with emaciated limbs; he not seeming to remember that a merciful man must be merciful to his beast, that true christian duty requires that man should treat with kindness all the dumb animals the Creator has made, that are placed under his care.

I saw those poor horses once, attached to a wagon having a load of hay upon it, standing in the road a little east of the front of the meeting-house; as I approached nearer I saw Dea. Fay coming from the direction of the house where the discord occurred, which I first mentioned, and approaching the horses, bade them go; the horses did not start, and he applied the short lash of a whip which he held in his hand twice to each horse, and then they reluctantly started. I asked myself the question, can a man be a true christian, to wear down a pair of horses so that it took two smart strokes with a lash on each horse to make them start an ordinary load, on level ground? I asked the question, but did not answer it.

Affairs remained quiet until the news came, Dr. Puffer is sick, and a gloom seemed to spread around. The listening ear of the town was bent toward the parsonage. "Is he better?" was the inquiry, and "no," was the answer. In a



day or two the bell tolled the knell of his death. The next day was Sunday, and his son-in-law, Rev. Lyman Gilbert, supplied his desk, while his remains lay cold in death, and the town was in mourning; they had lost a valuable friend. Many of his then parishioners were joined in wedlock by him, many of them were baptized at the altar by him, and many of their parent's funeral obsequies were performed by him, and now he was gone, and universal sorrow prevailed.

But scarcely had his remains been interred, ere another scene commenced. The society called a meeting to adopt measures for the supply of the pulpit, which was then vacant. They chose a committee for that purpose, and the committee applied to the University School of Harvard College, for a candidate for that purpose, and a young man named Robert F. Walcut, who had just graduated from the school, was recommended to them, and they obtained his services as candidate. He preached a few Sabbaths, and the society held another meeting and voted to give Mr. Walcut a call for settlement. Up jumps Dea. Fay, "Whoever heard of the parish giving a minister a call? the church should give the minister a call, and the parish concur;" which was a quotation from the records, made while the territory was a parish. It was not a parish then, it was a religious society in the town of Berlin; it was supported and maintained by the town, and the town was the society, and the town did not agree with Dea. Fay. They owned the property, they built the house and paid for it, and defrayed all the expenses of the society, and as they had a right, they voted to settle Robert F. Walcut, and he was ordained as minister.

Then Dea. Fay and his followers seceded—and like the prodigal of old, left their Father's house—instead of asking for the portion of goods that fell to them, they took without leave all they could lay their hands upon. They plundered the closet underneath the pulpit, of the sacrament service of





silver, plate, and other utensils, which until then had been considered safe; and also carried off the church records. Those who remained at home, not being pugnacious, did not fight for the recovery of their property, but applied to a magistrate for a writ of replevin, and got Lyman Moore, then Deputy Sheriff of Lancaster, to serve the writ, which was done, and the property brought home to its lawful owner, and has remained there ever since.

Notwithstanding the secession, Robert F. Walcut was ordained, and during the ceremonies a small patch of plastering, which had been loosened by the entrance of water through the belfry, fell from the ceiling upon the floor just back of the singer's seats. The sudden crash during the stillness of the ceremonies produced a startling sensation in the audience, but the cause was soon known, and nothing further thought of it then.

It was afterwards echoed and re-echoed at the corners of the streets,—for poll-parrots, like children and fools, are apt to disclose the expressions of wiser ones, spoken in unguarded moments. The next day we heard sounding in our ears, "The walls cried out, 'Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!'" At the next corner was heard what seemed to be an echo, "The walls cried out, 'He! He! He! He!'" The re-echo we will wait awhile for.

The Church divided, the majority going with the seceders, the choir also divided, and Merrick Houghton, who had been their chorister and teacher for many years, went with them. He was one of the first of singers in his day, and having great influence in the choir, naturally took others with him. The leadership of the old choir fell upon Amos Sawyer, Jr. There was naturally a competition between the two leaders for the services of one of the best soprano singers I ever heard, and fifty dollars bonus, paid her by Sawyer, retained her in the old choir; so she told me while



sitting at table with herself and husband in her own house. She remained in the choir until her removal to Ohio, several years afterwards. Houghton remained in the other choir several years, and then removed to Amherst and became a noted singer and leader in Amherst College.

The seceders built a small house and settled a man by the name of Baldwin as minister over them ; and he remained with them two years, and then asked for dismissal which was granted. They then chose a man named Burdett, who remained about the same time. After his dismissal, Mr. Clark was installed as Pastor, and he was succeeded by Robert Carver. In the meantime, Mr. Walcut had asked for dismissal, and it was granted, and David R. Lamson filled his place, remaining several years, and was cotemporary with Mr. Carver. This was about the time the anti-slavery and temperance movements came up. Mr. Lamson was the greater champion of Anti-slavery, and Mr. Carver and his society were greater champions of the Temperance movement. They both sympathized with each other, to a certain degree.

Mr. Lamson's people were much offended at his too frequent allusions in his sermons to Anti-slavery and Temperance. I have frequently heard his people say, that they did not want "Rum and Niggers," "Rum and Niggers" preached to them all the time. They also objected to the too frequent intimacy between Mr. Lamson and Mr. Carver on the subject of Temperance.

About this time I buried my first wife under very distressing circumstances. Mr. Carver and myself always having been friendly as citizens and neighbors, he wrote me a letter, the first part of which was sympathetic, after a half-page of words of condolence, he changed his effort to proselyting. He wrote thus : "Could you see the plain, simple views we entertain of religion, you would see that it is the very thing



you need now." He continued in other language of similar import, the design of which was to lead me into an approval of their peculiar Theological views. I replied to his letter ; inasmuch as it was a sympathizing letter, I accepted it with gratitude, but with its doctrinal efforts I had no sympathy. I further said, "As to your plain, simple views, I am well acquainted with them, as with those of every other denomination of which I ever heard. I have made special efforts to ascertain the principles of those doctrines and theories, but I find none so good as the Bible itself, and I think that is all sufficient for human belief and guidance." My reply drew forth another letter from Mr. Carver in which he iterated and reiterated all the stereotyped phrases concerning faith and some other matters.

I replied to the second letter, stating my views of true faith. "I believe in an active, ever-working and ever-present operative faith. Faith without works is dead, being alone ;" and added, "show me thy faith without works, and I will show you mine by my works." I then said, "I think you had better stay in your own fold, and take care of your own sheep ; there is work enough for you to do, and I think you had better do it, instead of going into other folds and stealing away their sheep and lambs."

The next time I saw Mr. Carver, he did not look me quite square in the face, but after a few kind words from me, and civil, neighborly respect, without reference to religious belief, we became friendly as before, and were ever so afterward. My belief was unchanged, and I suppose his was also.

Soon after this little episode, Mr. Lamson asked for dismissal, and left. It was not long after Mr. Lamson's dismissal, before Mr. Carver also left, for what reason, I know not. Both Societies were then without a stated minister, and remained so for six months or more. The Unitarian Society employed Mr. Bucklin of Marlborough, who was





considered a moderate Orthodox. The other Society had also supplied their pulpit by daily hire. I was then Superintendent of the Unitarian Sabbath-school. I had ever felt sorrowful over the separation which had taken place. I always had longed to see them united again. I had resolved never to do anything which would tend to continue the discord, but to do everything which my feeble influence could do to re-unite them.

I was then and ever had been on most intimate and friendly relations with Mr. Bride, who was at that time Superintendent of the other school. I said to my friends, "This is foolish, to pay two Orthodox ministers, when really we are hardly able to maintain one. Why not let us propose to the other Society to employ a candidate, and all come here to meeting to hear him, and see if we cannot settle him. I also talked with Mr. Bride. After some consultation, both Parishes held meetings and each chose a committee who were to meet each other in consultation. The Unitarian Parish chose for their committee, my uncle, John Bartlett, who was Deacon of the Church, my uncle, Asa Sawyer, who had been my predecessor for many years in the Sabbath-school, and myself. We met a similar committee from the other Parish, and it was agreed that a candidate should be obtained, and application was made to New Haven, and they sent us a man named Herrick, and after preaching three Sabbaths, he came to me and said that he come for the purpose of uniting us ; that he believed there were good people in all denominations. He was going to be very liberal, and have in us all united, and we would be a happy people. Said I : " If we settle you, are you going to exchange with the neighboring ministers, as our Rev. Dr. Puffer used to do." " O ! No !" said he, " I can't do that," " Why not ? " said I. " Why ! " said he, " if I do they will turn me out of the Association." " Ah ! " said I, " you





are bound with Sampson's green withes, are you? If I believed as you have expressed yourself to me, I would strip off those green withes, and throw them to the four winds. I would come out free and do what was right if the Heavens should fall."

That was a wet blanket for him; he preached one Sabbath more, and then set his face toward New Haven, and I have not seen him since.

We next employed a man by the name of Henry Adams. He gave very good satisfaction. He appeared to be a pleasant man, and apparently would make a good townsman and citizen, and seemed to be very generally approved. To settle him there must be a process of formal uniting. A Parish meeting was called to consider the mode of uniting. There seemed no legal mode of uniting except by signing the book of membership of the Unitarian Parish, and that could not be properly done except in open Parish meeting, or at the office of the Parish Clerk. I knew of nothing improper being done at the time, but have since learned that the book was taken from the Parish Clerk's office by some member or members of the returning parish and carried around through the town, and recruits drummed up and pledges made that if a tax should be levied, their taxes should be paid for them, if they would sign the book and come forward and vote. Not content with what they could find in the town, they carried the book out of town. I did not know the fact at the time; if I had have known it I should have acted differently. There was another fact I will here state. The two Committees met at the house of Mr. Bride to make preparations for the installation of Mr. Adams. While so met, my uncle observed: "The fact is I have changed my principles, I am willing to own I have changed my principles." I was astonished, poor old man, he had long defended his faith. For many years he and his



wife had walked to meeting together until they approached the Common, and there they parted. His wife went to the New Church, while he went to the Old House, the house of his fathers. Now she was about to come back to him, and he admitted he had changed his principles. Truly said, "once a man and twice a child." He did not turn his coat, but pulled off the old and put on a new one, and it did not require a very shrewd Yankee to guess where he got it. But Mr. Adams was installed. During the ceremonies another patch of plastering fell from under the church tower; but this time it did not all strike the floor. A part of it struck the bass-viol which was leaning against the window-stool. It made a different sound from that which fell when Mr. Walcut was ordained. There were two "Cry outs," one of the walls, and one of the viol; but the old heads were not listening probably, for if they were they did not repeat in the presence of the poll-parrots; for the poll-parrots did not repeat, "The walls cried out, Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!" But Mr. Adams was installed nevertheless.

What was done afterward in the Church and Sabbath-school, I do not know. Whether the old members of the Church who had run away some years before without certificates of recommendation to any other Church returned again without letters of recommendation, I do not know.

I did not belong to the Church or meddle with their business, but I was Superintendent of the Sabbath-school, chosen by the unanimous vote of the school and teachers, and had served in that place six months or more. I was first to propose a re-union, and by my influence, coupled with that of others, the re-union was brought about; but they had got a new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. They never knew me afterwards. I never resigned that office, and have not to this day. How they could have superseded me I cannot see, but I was informed that they organized a



Sabbath-school, but never knew from any personal knowledge. I was anxious for a re-union, but supposed we were dealing with honest people ; but I had not studied Logic enough. I did then see that men could not, " Gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles." They had been taught that there was no merit in men, but only in the Savior. We had just what they had been taught. They could neither be honorable nor honest ; that would not serve their purpose. They seized what they could get and kept what they got, as the sequel will tell.

After the installation and other matters were accomplished, a Parish meeting was called, and one article in the warrant was, " To see how the Minister's salary should be raised." A motion was made to raise it by subscription. That was voted down : instantly uprose twenty or more of the old parishioners, with pieces of paper in their hands. I saw in an instant the danger and sprang to my feet to tell them what they were doing. The next instant I saw if I did it would set the house on fire. I looked across the house at their trusted leader and counsellor. He sat with his arms on the bench as motionless as a statue. I looked at his hands to see if he had a paper ; he had none. Had he counseled them ? I turned back and looked at the clerk, he had received their certificates and they had committed suicide. They had ceased to be members of the Parish, and had thrown away their right in the meeting-house. They could not come back again without a majority vote of the remaining members, and the majority then was in the returned members.

I had intended to hold them to good behavior as we had a majority vote, but their dishonesty in drumming up recruits, and the unwitting defection of the old members, threw the balance into the other scale. They then had everything their own way. When they first left it was a Town Society, when





they came back it was a Unitarian Parish. It had been organized as such two or three years before by persons enrolling their names in a book purporting to be the "Parish Roll of Membership," the Parish having adopted that mode of admitting members. By signing that book they became legal members of the Unitarian Parish.

And what are they to-day? Have they reorganized, or are they the same Unitarian Parish? They went on very independently; they occupied the town's meeting-house, built on a common given to the citizens of Bolton by deed of gift from Samuel Jones. It was aliened them and warranted and defended to them, their heirs and assigns forever. They committed a trespass upon the town's common by setting a lot of Rock Maple trees in geometrical form across the common, in front of the meeting-house, obstructing it, thereby, from uses to which it had been appropriated, and also producing a disagreeable aspect.

A few of the trees at one angle were in the public way. Johnathan D. Merriam, Esq., being Highway Surveyor, removed them. They had hated him for years, he having been an obstacle to the accomplishment of their many designs. He was a general counsellor in Town and Parish affairs. They now found an opportunity to make an attack upon him. They prosecuted him under the law for willfully mutilating public shade trees. The old man was known to shed tears under the persecution. He was tried and acquitted, he having the right as Highway Surveyor to remove them. The rest of the trees remained for a while, much to the disgust of many of the citizens, they objecting to the Parish placing obstructions upon the town's property. But they waked up one fine morning in the midst of mingled joy and consternation; all the trees except those beside the County way were lying on the ground. They had been sawed off close to the ground, and who was the culprit?



They measured footprints to try to find out who made them. One man was flatly accused of doing the deed, much to his own disgust. At last the culprit was found. He was a man the least to be suspected. He borrowed a saw, and told what he was going to do with it, and was thus found out. He was prosecuted and paid the penalty in the county-house. It was one of those cases where the Lord brings good out of evil. He violated the law and paid the penalty; but the deed was productive of more good than any other individual act that I know of being done in Berlin.

It will have been observed that I raise the question,—What is the true name of the present Parish? Will their assumption change their name without a formal organization? It was said in the latter part of Dr. Puffer's ministry, that the old ministers who participated in his ordination had changed their principles. They protested that they had not changed. Let us see by some acts which did take place.

There used to be two companies in town who had each their association of individuals, and they held their social dances, then called balls. They were styled the old company and the young company. I heard one of the old company say, that at one of their balls, held at the tavern hall, they proposed to invite Dr. Puffer to take supper with them. Edward Johnson was delegated to bear the invitation. The invitation was accepted, and he returned accompanied by Dr. Puffer, and he sat with them at their festive board, thereby sanctioning the innocent amusement of the young people many of whose foreheads had been baptized with his own hands. He addressed the Throne of Grace, and asked a blessing upon their festive board.

Another instance I will relate, of which I was an eye witness. The first ball I ever attended, Phebe Puffer, daughter of Dr. Puffer, and his only daughter by his last wife was one of the company, and Lewis Sawyer, son of Dea.



Oliver Sawyer, was her companion and escort. The foregoing statement will serve to show the sentiments entertained by that denomination at that time. Let us now see from the sentiments expressed what the change was. The same company afterwards held another ball, and the seceders who left the old parish held a meeting the same evening, and were said to have expressed the following sentiments: "The young people are dancing themselves into hell."

In a later day, while Mr. Carver was minister, an old citizen by the name of Alvan Sawyer, died. His funeral was to take place on the Sabbath. He was an old honored citizen, and had always worshiped in the old house until enfeebled so that he could not. The Old Parish as usual threw open their doors for the funeral services, and Mr. Carver, their minister, was invited to the pulpit. We expected a funeral sermon. Instead we had a sermon directed entirely to a few young people who had held a social ball but a short time before. He took his text from Solomon's advice to young people; he said it was ironical language; he used it ironically. He would say to the young people, "Enjoy yourselves but remember that you have got to be punished for such enjoyments." He asked the question: "Who would be willing to go out of a ball-room into Eternity?" He was in the coward's castle, we could not answer him: the law would not allow us to disturb a religious meeting. We had to submit to the insolence, but with rather an ill grace. We were a little unwise: to show our contempt we had another ball in about a fortnight.

I allude to these things to show the sentiment entertained by Dr. Puffer while he was associated with those Ministers who ordained him, and also those entertained by the seceders who ruled him in his last days.

The question now arises: "Who owns the present meeting-house?" The town built it and paid for it and the





Common was given by deed to the citizens who compose the Town, and the Town has never sold the meeting-house, or given it away. If the Town has ever been deprived of its property, it was by fraud. Can any Parish or any other body of people prosper while entertaining a fraud? It may be said, if there is a fraud, their fathers committed it. If the fathers committed a fraud did not the sons uphold it? If there is a wrong, the wrong will never become right. Right is Eternal, and will ever beget right. Wrong is Infernal, and will ever beget wrong. Wrong can be superceded by right, but it can never become right. If there has been a wrong, there never can be prosperity while the wrong exists. There suggests to me two ways of doing right, one is to call a town meeting, see what the town will do with its own property, and let their decision be final. Another is to bring a Bill of Equity suit in the Supreme Court : that will decide the right of the Town and Parish finally.

Events are to be judged by their results : let us trace the effect of an erroneous theology. Dea. Fay was the champion of the Edwards' doctrine. He was well educated, a fluent speaker, and an efficient leader. He seemed to believe what he taught, and so believing, was ever active and untiring in his efforts. He was a plausible leader, and his followers were easily led, like those named in Scripture, as blind led by the blind, and both fell into the ditch. Dea. Fay was afterward admitted to be an insane man. Some persons thought he feigned insanity, on account of testimony given in the James Goddard will case ; but I knew him to be insane from ocular demonstration. I made the coffin for the body of his deceased son, and as was my practice carried it to the house to assist in depositing the remains therein. I placed it upon the floor beside the remains. Dea. Fay came into the room, caught hold of the head end of the coffin, lifted it up from the floor on end, looked at the bottom, the sides and the top





in rapid motion. His son Nahum came and took him by the arm and led him out. No man feigning insanity, would have done that act within six feet of the body of his deceased son. He was insane; when did he become so? Were I under oath I could not tell. In my opinion he began to be insane when he first embraced the Edwards' theology; as evidence, he used to teach school, and I heard my uncle say that when he was a scholar under him, he heard him tell the scholars if they did certain acts, naming them, when they came to die they would go to Hell and be cast into a fire hotter than any earthly fire, and there be burned forever. Such language is to me evidence of insanity. His mind was unbalanced; he could see one thing and pursue that one thing to the exclusion of nearly all others. His followers seemed to partake of that one idea, which is evidence to me that a body of persons can become insane by following an insane leader.

He had a coadjutor in the person of Luke Fosgate. *He* was never tiring, always exerting himself to propagate the same doctrine. I have seen him often, going in and out of houses, and by inquiring of the inmates, I found that his business was to propagate religious ideas. For many years he was in that active business. At length a new tempest came up. The Millerite blast carried him away in its current. He became its most energetic advocate. I went to a meeting, held under a tent, the day before the one set for the destruction of the world. Luke Fosgate was there present, and made a prayer, in which he uttered the following words: "Without a doubt before another day dawns, the Lord will come, and the wicked will be destroyed." I had learned what I went for, that they were an honest, deceived people. I went home and slept well that night; when I rose in the morning, the world was all the same as before, nothing uncommon had happened. I saw no more of Luke Fosgate



for some time, but after a while I heard that he and his wife had gone to the Shakers. I saw him several times afterward dressed in Shaker garb; once he was with the woman whom he had sworn to love and cherish as his wife. He called her "Sister Mary," and they had with them the inevitable spy, another woman must go with them when they traveled, no one woman ever being trusted alone with a man, not even Luke Fosgate and his wife, to whom we was lawfully married, and they had five grown up children. He lived and died with the Shakers. Was he sane?

I have promised to allude again to Mrs. Puffer. I was sent for by her after the societies had united, to do some painting in the rooms which she occupied in the old parsonage. I complied with her request, and did the labor; during the time I was painting she was much in the rooms, one of them being her living room. I had a very pleasant conversation with her, and no one could be in her presence without feeling themselves elevated. She was a talented and noble woman. I spoke to her of the union of the societies, which I had been instrumental in bringing about. I expressed to her my disappointment at certain results. She observed, "I am sorry they were ever united, they never can agree, and they ought never to have united."

I used language to draw out her theological sentiments. I would not engage with her in controversy, I knew it would be useless; but I wished to know, personally, her real sentiments. She expressed them freely. I found them strongly the Edwards' theory. I told her that I could not conceive it possible that a portion of a family should go down to that terrible abyss, while the other portion could be happy in heaven knowing that their friends were suffering such misery. She replied "Well, I believe that it will in some way be brought about, that the punishment of the wicked will contribute to the happiness of the righteous, and add to God's



glory. I could but respect her, though I could not believe in her theory.

I must allude to one person more. Mr. Josiah Bride and I were always friends. We were of different opinions, but always charitable toward one another. He was superintendent of one sabbath-school, and I of the other, when the parishes united. He was upon one committee, and I upon the other while the preparatory proceedings for the re-union were taking place. Business life separated us for many years. Three years ago I met him before his own house. During a pleasant conversation, he said: "I think very differently from what I used to think. I had a very pleasant conversation with your Uncle a short time since, and I enjoyed it much. I am satisfied if we had known each others sentiments better we should have been more agreed, and there would have been less bitterness of feeling."

Mr. Bride was at my house a few weeks since and expressed his views of the future, unsolicited and although I did not express mine, I could not now name any disagreement between us, and I do not know that I have ever changed my theological views.

I have heard that there has been some conveyances of land, purported to be a part of the common; but it was a great mistake, as will be seen by reference to the copy which I herewith publish of the deed from Samuel Jones to the inhabitants of Bolton, who had been set off as a Parish. I obtained the copy of the deed from the Register of Deeds, and is certified to by him as a true copy. By that deed, there is a strip of land, being a part of the common, two rods wide, lying South of the County road. The first bound described was a Red Oak tree standing near the house of Mrs. Peters, about nineteen rods distant from the burying field, and *not* to the *corner* of the burying field as has been supposed, thence turning Northerly, running five rods





which would carry it precisely to the North line of the County road ; thence turning Northeasterly, running ten rods to a Red Oak, marking the line of the County road, thence a little more Northerly on the North-westerly line of the Town way, twenty-six rods, thence Easterly across the Town way two rods, to a heap of stones ; thence South-westerly, eleven rods, thence Southerly about twelve rods, to the Northerly line of the County road ; thence South-westerly, across the County road, five rods, to the first bound.

It will be seen that the Common does not extend across the County road at the Western extremity, until it reaches ten rods from the point opposite the corner of the burying field. And then the Common is bounded on the Town way as it then existed, which was the only Town way leading to Bolton.

I understand that a Town way has been recently laid out on the west side of the Common, they supposing there was no Town way there. But if they had gone to the Town records of Bolton, they would probably have found the record of its being laid out, if not in Bolton, then at Lancaster, for Berlin was a part of Bolton when the deed was given and Bolton might have been a part of Lancaster at the time the deed was made out. Certainly the deed describes a Town way on the west side of the Common, then existing : hence all the land west of the Town way, owned by the Town was an after purchase, and not included in the Jones' deed.

I well remember the meeting-house sheds being built. They were built by the Town, and sold to individuals, who by such sale obtained the right of use, but no right to tear down or destroy, any more than they had to tear out pews in a meeting-house. Every person who has taken down a shed has committed a trespass. Whoever bought of the owners, bought only the right of use, and not the right to



mutilate the town's property. The Parish had no shadow of right there any more than the British had to offer Ethan Allen land to serve them. If there have been any deeds given of such land, by the Parish, they are a fraud and of none effect, and the givers of such deeds are liable to an action for fraud under the statute making it a penal offense to make a fraudulent conveyance of property.

If Miss Bullard has bought any real estate near her own premises, of the Parish, she has bought her own property; for neither the Parish nor the Town ever did own any property there, and whoever made the conveyance had better not delay making restitution for the fraud.

I have written this history in behalf of right. I believe right is Eternal, and will ever beget right. Wrong is Infernal, and will ever beget wrong. Wrong can be substituted by right. Good may come from the discovery of wrong, but good can never be made out of wrong. It is said that error will go round the world while truth is putting on his boots. But when Truth comes with his boots well on, Error had better get out of the way, for Truth will stand firm in his boots.

Let me here advise the Parish in Berlin to do right, or they will never prosper. Every apparent prosperity will be a sham until they place themselves right.



W. B. Davison,

Manisana,

New York City,

N. Y.

1385



## Berlin, Mass.

In June 1821 Rev. W. Hayward of Hudson & Rev. J. B. Waterhouse of Clinton having had knowledge of the existence of a liberal element in the town of Berlin, Mass., came here & preached alternately in the Town Hall on Sunday afternoons. In Sept. following the services of the same clergymen were secured to for one year. At the expiration of the year such had been the interest awakened that the present society was organized, taking the name 'First Unitarian Society,' & it was voted to secure the services of a minister for one year, pledging for his support the sum of eight hundred dollars. Rev. B. W. Green was engaged, but after nine months labor he resigned to enter the service of the 'Christian Unity Society' in Boston, as a colonel with Rev. C. B. Bradley. Mr. Granville Pierce was employed to fill the vacancy for three months. At the close of this engagement Mr. Pierce was ordained & remained pastor of the society for three years, doing a very successful work. He was succeeded by Rev. H. L. Shattuck, who remained two years, & was followed by





Berlin 6-11-1882

W. B. Garrison

I send you, by the kindness of Mr. S. H. Carter, a little work containing the history of Berlin as a town & parish, up to the date of organization of the present society, which I have given in a brief manner in writing, if these will help you in your work I am glad to be able to help you to them,

Yours truly

W. C. Sutcliffe.

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